

Application No. 09/400,833
Response dated December 9, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 4, 2004

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 19 and 20 are pending in this application, of which claim 20 has been amended.

No new claims have been added.

Claims 2, 3, 19, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Akimoto et al., in the Office Action mailed on August 4, 2004.

Applicant appreciates the discussion with the Examiner on the phone on December 6, 2004.

Claim 20 has been amended to clearly recite that the traveling body is moved simultaneously and above the product-housing section and the material-housing section on the workpiece-storage device.

In the invention of Akimoto et al., the movement of extending the arm 35 in the X direction is only limited at the time when the robot 35 is stayed in front of the exit of the carriers 2, 3 or the processing units 20. The arm 35 of Akimoto et al. cannot move simultaneously in the X and Y directions, over the carriers 2, 3 and processing unit 20. The arm 35 must be not-extended when the robot 30 moves along the transfer path 31 or in the Y direction, because the arm 35, if extended, collides with the side walls of the carriers 2, 3 and the processing units 20. As shown in Figs. 1 and

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7-9, the carriers 2, 3 have side walls, and the robot 30 of Akimoto is first moved along the transfer path 31, and after stopping the movement, the arm 35 is then extended in order to load or unload the wafers on or from the carriers 2, 3 (col. 4, lines 6-9). Nothing provided in the robot 30 of Akimoto et al. can move simultaneously in the X (or A) and Y directions over the carriers 2, 3 and processing unit 20. Thus, the rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is not supported by Akimoto et al. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, claims 2, 3, 19, and 20, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

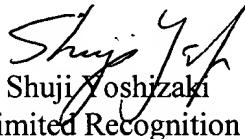
If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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Petition for Extension of Time

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